



Committee on Homeland Security

Democrats
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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CONGRESSMAN THOMPSON RESPONDS TO STATE OF THE UNION: *BUILD OUR DEFENSES TO PREVENT ATTACKS AT HOME*

Washington, DC — Congressman Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Committee, issued the following statement on President Bush's State of the Union address:

"Winning the war on terror must start at home. More than three years after 9/11, and two years after the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the Bush Administration has failed to fund programs needed to protect our nation.

Our nation's first responders – the police, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians – still cannot communicate with one another. No cost is too high to make sure that those who put their lives at risk to save us can talk to each other.

The Department's Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which is responsible for securing our borders, remains critically under-funded. It faced widespread hiring freezes and a 45 percent cut in most operating expenses this past year. I am concerned that the President's budget request will not correct the problem this year.

Our airplanes are still not secure. It is simply unacceptable for us to continue discovering guns, knives, and other weapons on planes. We must invest in explosive detection equipment at airports and screen all cargo on passenger jets to protect Americans from terrorist sabotage.

We must get homeland security right if we are to protect America."
